

Abstract of the Disclosure

A clearinghouse maintains a database of metadata about CAD and other product related data across disparate and dispersed databases. The various databases may be 5 located behind corporate firewalls. A CAD plug-in application or standalone application may communicate with the clearinghouse using an easily transportable protocol such as HTTP and XML protocols to sort, browse, and request data from the disparate and dispersed databases. The clearinghouse may retrieve the requested data, translate the data if necessary, and send the requested data to the user. The user may also publish or 10 otherwise notify the clearinghouse of data that is able to be shared.